

The Grave-Stone of Sultan Mansur Shah of Malacca.

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The following suggestions with reference to Mr. J. P. Moquette's scholarly paper on the above subject translated by Dr. Winstedt in J. R. A. S., S. B. No. 85 may not be out of place here:—

(a) That the word **المرحوم** which comes *after* مظفرشاه in Mr. Moquette's reading of Plate I be placed immediately *before* مظفرشاه; firstly because *that is* the usual order (i. e. *al-marhûm* first and the name of the deceased following) when the expression is used, especially by the Malays; and secondly, seeing that the word **السلطان** which lies directly above the word منصور, (see third line in Plate I) is read *before* منصور, it follows that the word **المرحوم** which lies also directly above the name مظفرشاه can also be read first. As far as I can judge from the plate, nothing seems to be there that makes it particularly necessary to violate usage and read **المرحوم** last.

(b) That the reading of دارالمآل (*dâri-'l-ma'al*) be substituted in place of دارامال (*dâri âmál*). For this I have several reasons:—

(1) دارآمال is not compatible, as far as rhythmic flow is concerned, with دارالحال with which it ought to correspond; because the latter (i.e. دارالحال) has the article **أل** and the former has not. From a grammatical stand-point there does not appear to be reason enough that دارالحال should have the article and دارآمال

should not. But if, to avoid all this, we use أَل and say دارالآمال , the clear-cut shape of the word in the inscription does not justify our doing so.

(2) أَمَال is the plural of أَمَل , and the word "hope" which is given for the translation can only be suitable if the Arabic is in the singular form. Besides, أَمَال is pronounced with a long vowel on the first syllable, and thus spoil again any rhythmic agreement with مَحَال of which the first syllable is short.

(3) If the form المَأْتَل is substituted, the agreement in rhythm with المَحَال is readily established, for the two would then be of the same form (noun of place) derived from roots of the same measure. The combination makes a perfect little rhymed-prose, with apparently punning sound—a feature so commonly prominent in short Arabic maxims and pithy sayings—such as would become any epitaph.

(4) The meaning of دارالمَأْتَل which is "the abode of return" or "The Final Abode" would just suit دارالمَحَال which is the "abode of change" or "The Transient Abode".

(5) In an inscription where, as in any monogram, the letters and different parts of the words are highly interwoven, it is not uncommon to find that one and the same stroke serves the double purpose of representing two letters of like appearance, or that two or more letters of more or less the same form become blended into one, or even die away in the meshes of loops and flourishes. In this light I think we are quite justified to assume that in the in-

scription the first "l" of the word المَأْتَل is partially blended in the final "l" of the same word. (See the first line of Plate II).

No doubt the changes suggested here are not of much consequence. Still I hope they make for some improvement on the reading so far deciphered.

It might be well also to call attention to the little misprints in spelling, which might be overlooked and might later lead to real mistakes:—

(a) The first السلطان (*as-sultan*) in the reading of Plate I should be written للسلطان (*lis-sultan*) as we find it correctly written in the Romanised reading; and the word منصو(ر) should read منصو(ر)

(b) The words بسم الاربعاء on page 3 should, I think, read يوم الاربعاء

(c) The words ليس الدنيا (*lais a'd-dunia.*) in the reading of Plate III should read ليس للدنيا (*laisa li'd-dunia.*).

That the “n” of السلطان and the “r” of Mansur cannot be traced may indeed be due to the mistakes of the mason. So also may the absence of any dots or diacritical points (*titek*) from the inscription be accounted for. But it is quite possible also that both have their explanation in (b) 5 above, or may have been worn out because of their smallness.

On any other matter regarding this subject, I am not able to form any independent idea; nor have any strong view to express beyond that, in my opinion, the reconstructions are really very ingenious, and the reading certainly much more acceptable than the one which used to be accepted before it.